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MAY 19, 1921

"ABSOLUTELY!"

Einstein has been among us, and has left the impression of a kindly personality and a strong mind. It may be true that only 13 persons in the world understand his theory in full: it may even be that he might say what Hegel is alleged to have said, "Only one man understands me, and he does not." But the fundamental theses of Einstein are not very difficult to understand. They are two:

First, all motion is relative.

Secondly, the velocity of light is independent of the velocity of its source.

The first we can believe as soon as we understand what is meant by it. The second bewilders us, but when we know what Einstein is talking about, we have no desire to contradict him.

But when we come to the application of these principles, we find ourselves in deep water. We have assented very cheerfully and without much thought to principles which will keep us thinking for a long time. Before we are through, we are wondering whether parallel lines do not meet, and whether anything is as we thought it was.

One thing we may as well learn, which is that there are not so many uses as some people suppose for the word "absolutely."

"That was absolutely the worst dinner any man ever ate."

"That road was absolutely the worst any man ever tried to drive a Ford car over."

"Strawberry ice cream is absolutely the nicest thing."

"Absolutely" is a word to be used only three or four times in a lifetime.

Herbert Spencer asked whether the captain of a vessel, walking westward on the deck of his ship sailing east, and walking just as fast as the ship is sailing, let us say four miles an hour, is really moving.

He is moving with the earth on its axis at the rate of a thousand miles an hour; he is moving around the sun at the rate of 70,000 miles an hour; and no one knows how much faster he is moving with the solar system. And he is moving with slow currents and tidal movements of the ocean. We know of few things that are stationary, and we have infrequent use for the word "absolute."

MEMORIAL TREES.

Pres't Harding has given his hearty approval to the movement for planting memorial trees along the important highways of the country in honor of the Americans sacrificed in the great war. In doing so he truly said:

"It would be not only the testimony of our sentiments, but a means to beautify the country which these heroes have served."

Certainly there could be no more beautiful memorial, none more dignified, than a great tree, and we hope the president's indorsement will mean an increased regard for trees generally and the planting of many trees not only along the highways but in other places.

Apart from the planting of memorial trees the movement may do much good as a reminder of how criminally wasteful of our forests we have been. They were a wonderful asset, economically and esthetically, but we have destroyed them as if we hated them. We are still destroying them, notwithstanding a late awakening of public opinion. Let us hope that we shall soon see a day when no man in this country can cut down a tree without planting one to take its place.

A REAL APPETITE.

Order of the Golden Fleece archives are claimed by Belgium and Austria, and the ownership is being decided by a jury appointed by the reparations committee.

Charles V was a knight in the order when he died in 1556. The archives show he was reprimanded for gluttony. Under examination he admitted he often ate four meals a day, starting with "the best part of a chicken at 5 a. m."

Gluttony by the few in those times was matched often by starvation fare for the many. Perhaps the few who ate so much ate from pride, because they could get it. Charles' great eating would impress some rich men today, not with distaste for his excesses, but with envy of his enormous appetite.

THE PLACE YOU DREAM OF.

There still remains one place on earth, inhabited by white people, where there's no work—and no taxes, no laws, no police, no tag days, no strap-hanging, no alarm clocks—and nothing to worry about. Tristan da Cunha is the place.

It's an island in the south Atlantic ocean, 1,500 miles southwest of St. Helena, where the imprisoned Napoleon died. The Tristanites are descendants of the relief garrison of British soldiers stationed there during Napoleon's captivity. Tristan is such a healthy place that nobody ever gets sick, so there are no doctors. Once the people had a chest of medicine, but about 10 years ago they got tired of having it around in the way, so they ditched it into the sea.

You've dreamed of a place like Tristan. It's the sort of paradise you yearn for when life in South Bend gets your goat and you'd like to crawl in a hole and pull the hole after you.

Only about 100 people live on Tristan, but they insist that no one ever wanted to leave. The only ship that ever visits them is a British cruiser that stops in once a year. No other contact with the outside world. If you could stow away aboard that cruiser, you'd find, at Tristan:

An island 21 miles around. A snow-clad extinct volcano rising in the center. A small village on a fertile green peninsula. Nothing to make people work. Nothing to pay taxes for. The inhabitants get fish, wild fowl, birds' eggs, clams, fruit and wild potatoes. When they want meat, they go out and kill wild sheep or cattle. Clothing and ammunition are obtained from the crew of the cruiser by bartering skins of the seals that sport on Tristan's rocky shores.

Tristan is said to be the only white settlement in the world that has no organized government. Inherited discipline from the people's soldier-ancestors, along with such an abundance of everything that there's no reason for committing theft or other crimes, has made laws and organized government unnecessary. The nearest neighbors are 1,200 miles away. While everybody in Tristan has all he wants and is contented, there's nothing worth stealing by invaders. Hence, no worry about wars.

Wouldn't Tristan be a wonderful place to migrate to, with your 100 best friends? There may be better places to live than Tristan, but—well, we'd like to take a poll of South Bend people, just to find out how many are weary of this perverted civilization of ours and its work, taxes, tag-day drives, politics, this-and-that "weeks," surly strangers and the glaring sun on city streets.

WHAT EDISON THINKS OF YOU.

Inventor Edison, to determine whether college men are what he considers ignoramuses, asks them 78 questions. He calls the test his "ignoramometer." The 78 questions were put up to Edwin Roche Hardy, Columbia university's 12-year-old "prodigy." The lad turned in 53 answers. He said, among other blunders, that Tallahassee is in Tennessee, that Horace Greeley founded the N. Y. Herald, and that mahogany is the hardest wood.

Don't smile at the boy-wonder until sure you could do as well. Admitting that many folk would answer that copra is a snake, that John Hancock was the founder of an insurance company, and that one of the ingredients of good white paint is a brush that doesn't shed bristles, there are several of the Edison questions that can't be answered directly.

For instance, who invented printing? The correct answer, supposedly, is Gutenberg. A Chinese would differ, claiming that his ancestors printed from movable type several thousand years before Gutenberg was born.

"What are felt hats made of?" Answer: Hair or fur fiber. But is this accurate? Many felt hats appear to be made from the sweepings gathered up by a vacuum cleaner.

Probably there are many who think that the cotton gin was invented by some bartender. If Edison wants a real "ignoramo-meter," he should include these questions:

How many home runs did Babe Ruth knock out last year?

Why does a man take off his hat instead of his collar when riding in an elevator?

If a dollar bought only four pounds of sugar in 1920 when you had it, what is a dollar worth now when you haven't got it?

How many raisins should be used to the gallon?

What was the name of the genius who figured out how far apart to place railroad ties so they can be walked on only with difficulty?

Answer those and qualify—for a job in an information bureau!

Wouldn't the Modern Youth throw a fit if he had to do some of the chores that were wished on father when he was a boy!

The way elevators work in some office buildings suggests that it might be better to keep the elevator on the ground and raise and lower the building.

In every country town, there is some fellow who seems never to do anything except sharpen an ax.

Other Editors Than Ours

POLAND AND THE TREATY.
(Indianapolis News.)

In his speech in the house of commons yesterday, Lloyd George condemned strongly, but none too strongly, the conduct of the Poles in Upper Silesia, and at least implied that the government of Poland was not without blame in the matter, though he was disposed to accept its disclaimer of responsibility. The prime minister said:

"Vilna was occupied by regular Polish troops in defiance of the allies. They were asked to retire, and they said: 'We have no responsibility for it.' The same thing is happening now, the same disclaimer of responsibility. Arms passing from Poland and officers crossing her frontiere make it very difficult to feel that those repudiations of responsibility anything but purely verbal."

The Polish people owe their liberty and independence, as pointed out by Lloyd George, wholly to the allies and to the Versailles treaty. Yet they are engaged in a flagrant violation of that treaty which the allies are bound to enforce. Poland, which did not win its liberty, but received it as a gift from the allies, is the last country in Europe that has a right to complain of the Versailles treaty. The Poles were divided in the war, half of them, as the prime minister said, fighting on the side of Germany. "They fell," Lloyd George said, "in German uniforms, and shot down Frenchmen, British and Italians who were fighting for their freedom." The question is one of enforcing the treaty and maintaining the peace of Europe. The allies are bound to enforce the treaty. The speaker could see but two ways of doing it, either by the use of allied troops, or else by permitting the Germans to do it. That is a matter for the allies to decide. But there can be no question that the treaty must be upheld. The case could hardly be better stated than in the following words:

"Not merely to disarm Germany, but to say that such troops as she has are not to be permitted to take part in restoring order—that is not fair. To say to Germany: 'Here is your province, here is something which has been decided by the treaty of Versailles, either for or against you, but Poles are to be allowed in defiance of that treaty to take it, and you will not be allowed to defend yourselves in a province which has been yours for 200 years, and which certainly has not been Polish for 600 years,' is discreditable and not worthy of the honor of any land. I am perfectly certain that will not be the attitude the allies will take. The only thing which I would like to say in behalf of the government is this: Whatever happens, we can not accept a fait accompli. That would be to permit a defiance which might lead to consequence of the most disastrous kind."

But for the treaty which the Poles are now violating, and the support of Great Britain, France and Italy—and we may add the good will of the United States—the new Polish state could not possibly live. If Germany were not disarmed, under the Versailles treaty, she would long since have taken all the territory of Poland that she desired to take, and have reclaimed all the territory that had been assigned to Poland by the treaty. The war of the Poles is, not against Germany, but against the allies, and against the peace and safety of Europe, and the world. The prime minister said:

"It, therefore, is essential in the interests of the nation that whatever our prejudices and predilections, whether we like this man or dislike the other, we should recognize that justice has nothing to do with likes or dislikes and that we must decide fairly and sternly according to the pact which we ourselves have signed."

That pact is the law of Europe, and also the charter of Polish liberties. It binds the allies—and Poland—quite as much as it does Germany.

The Tower of Babel
BY BILL ARMSTRONG

FALL OUT, BOYS, AND POLICE UP AROUND YOUR TREES.

South Bend, Ind.,
May 18, 1921.

Mr. Jos. M. Stephenson,
Publisher News-Times.

Dear Jos.:

I seen you up to the Rotary club this noon so I know you will be interested in what transpired between me and Mr. Jos. Neff, who looks like Harding but is only the president of a bank. I set down beside Jos. more because of his occupation than anything else. You know a man in the newspaper game can't know none too many bankers.

Soon as I got set down I began making conversation. This seemed to impress Mr. Neff and the others who set around me, all of them joining in heartily.

"Been a fine day so far, hain't it?" I observed with my customary enthusiasm.

"I hadn't noticed it," said Jos. the banker as he give me a look like I was a visiting haymaker.

"Yes, this is the kind of weather that makes a man want to work," I continued.

"Why don't you?" ast Mr. Neff.

Jos. next ast me wouldn't I like to buy a tree. I sez, thinking he was trying to plague me, "what kind of a tree, hall, shoe or family," giving him one of my rare smiles for which I am famous.

I guess Jos. didn't remember for a minute who he was setting beside, because he said:

"Oh, I forgot who I was talking to. I ast you if you would buy a tree, presuming of course that you were familiar with the widely known plan to plant trees throughout the nation on the principal highways, a tree to represent each one of the millions of boys who were in the service. We are—"

"I think that's a great scheme, Jos," I tole him, "suppose the idea is for us veterans to plant our own trees, keep 'em watered good for 30 or 40 years, then hack them down and sell them for stove wood, the money secured to represent our bonus. That's a good scheme. I'll buy a tree; can you deliver one to my office this afternoon, a fumed oak preferred?"

Jos. explained carefully that he was not taking orders for trees at the luncheon and went into details on the proposition which sounds O. K. to me all around. It seems Mr. Stephenson, that the plan is to have different organizations plant so many of the trees along the Abe Lincoln and Dixie highways, each tree to have on it the name of some man that served in the war between the nations that brought on prohibition.

The thought strikes me in this connection that it's a good thing Justice of the Peace Joseph Vernon Wypiszynski, who is a good friend of mine, wasn't no soldier, because the committee would have to go to the expense of purchasing a California red wood tree to get Joe's name on properly.

I think though this plan can be made a great success and I am certainly with Mr. Neff on it and give him freely my moral support. I don't know what club is going to buy my tree, but I am going to specify that it be planted within five or 10 minutes walk from the court house. I am strong for the tree idea and want my name in at least 120 point Gothic type on the tree, with an arrow or index finger pointing to my rank, but you can understand that my tree must be down near the center of town because I can't be spending the rest of my life walking back and forth out to that tree with tourists.

It would also be the only sensible thing to do too, so far as the general public is concerned. Take for instance, a automobile party drops into the Oliver hotel and looks up Andy Weisberg, and they say to Andy after looking his narrow rimmed straw hat over:

"If it hain't too much trouble, where is Bill Armstrong's tree located?"

"I'm awful sorry my friends, but the committee booted the thing and planted Armstrong's tree clear down by Terre Coupe, Ind.." Weisberg would have to reply. You see it would make a lot of tourists sore, and we can't afford to do anything like that. It would be worse than having to tell them that we had had to close our wide open commercial town!

We veterans are going to have a lot of fun on these tree highways. Think of the sport of slipping out some dark night and pulling Private Emil Johnson's tree out by the roots because he kicked on our new advertising rate. The committee will probably make Art MacDonald's a poison ivy vine, and George Sands' will likely wither up and die unless the committee is able to hang a Cascade highball up in its branches every night.

Then some day a party of Tribune folks will be out in the country for a day of enjoyment, and they will start down the road that has my tree on it, and 95 per cent of the occupants of the automobile will let out a holler and they'll jump in the ditch and run the risk of spoiling their Sunday clothes, rather than ride past my tree. And Norm Adler will like as not insist on the limbs of his tree be decked out in Phoenix hose.

Respectfully,
BILL ARMSTRONG.

P. S. I forgot to mention that Schuyler Rose, who I owe a coal bill, took me to the lunch. You talk about turning your left cheek if a guy slaps you on the right. That's Schuyler.

Ignorant Essays
By J. P. McEVOY

TYPICAL CONVERSATION. Trying to "Place" Him.

(Scene: Any place, any time. You have a good friend with you. You meet an old acquaintance, but you can't recall his name. "Face is familiar" and all that sort of thing. "Know him as well as I know you" and all that rot. Problem: You must introduce the old acquaintance to your friend, but you don't dare ask him his name. What to do! What to do! Well, you open the conversation and trust to luck.)

YOU—Well, hello, there, how are you anyway?

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—Fine, how goes it with you?

YOU—Fine. (Internally) What the devil is his name? I must find out. (Aloud) "Where you been all this time?"

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"Oh, just here and there."

YOU—(Internally) Not much of a lead in that. (Aloud) "Well, well, glad to hear it, glad to hear it. And how are all the folks?"

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"Oh, just fine, and how are all yours?"

YOU—(Aloud) Great. (Internally and desperately.) Great gee whittakers, I've got to get a lead on this guy. I can't have my friend standing around here like a dummy without introducing him. (Aloud) "Well, well, that's fine. By the way, what are you doing now?"

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"Oh, just the same old thing. What are you doing huh? What are you doing?"

YOU—(Aloud) "Oh, just the same as a'ways." (Internally and wildly) "What the devil does he do? What's his name? Who is he? Well, I'll take a chance. (Aloud) "Heard from Jack lately?"

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"Jack who?"

YOU—(Slightly staggered but recovering) "Oh, you know, Jack, dear old Jack. (There is always a dear old Jack.)

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"Oh, yes, Jack...of course, dear old Jack... well, well. I haven't heard from Jack for years and years."

YOU—(Internally) I wonder what Jack he's talking about. Well, I'll try once more. (Aloud) "Ever see any of the old gang? (There is always an old gang.)

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"Old gang? No, I haven't seen any of 'em for a long time."

YOU—(Utterly beaten) "Well, I'm mighty glad I ran into you. Come and see me sometime. At the same old place."

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—"I sure will. S'long.

YOU—"S'long, old top." (Internally) Who the devil is he? What the devil is his name?

OLD ACQUAINTANCE—Who the devil is he? What the devil is his name?

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More Truth Than Poetry
By JAMES J. MONTAGUE

SQUARING THE CAVE MAN.

When first we read that cave men took
The largest clubs that they could carry,
As they went fondly forth to look
For ladies whom they meant to marry,
And with a blow upon the head
Made brief and business-like their courting,
In sorrow and surprise we said:
"That isn't sporting!"

It savors more of true romance
According to our modern notion,
If every lady has a chance
To test her best young man's devotion.
If she perforce must swoon away,
What time her dome the club went "thud!" on,
The poor thing could not even say,
"This is so sudden!"

And now a volume comes to hand
Which says the old beliefs are phony,
And that cave ladies would not stand
This forceful form of matrimony.
The wayward lovers never used
Their clubs the female heart to soften,
It was the ladies who abused
This right more often.

The cave man had a heart of gold;
He was a kind and loving hubby;
Though auroch sinewed, fierce and bold,
He held the clubbing wasn't clubby,
We're glad to learn he loved his wife,
Toiled hard for children and dependents,
In fact, led just as good a life
As his descendents.

(Copyright, 1921.)

From The Heart Out.

Complaint is made that the German movies end tragically. Well, could you expect any German to write comedy, just at present?

There Soon Won't be Any Excess Profits.

It looks as if it were supergatory to repeal the excess profits tax.

JUST FOLKS
By EDGAR A. GUEST

PLAYING FOR KEEPS.

I've watched him change from his bibs and things, from bonnets known as "cute,"
To little frocks, and later on I saw him don a suit;
And though it was of calico, those knickers gave him joy,
Until the day we all agreed 'twas time for corduroy.
I say I've seen the changes come, it seems with bounds and leaps,
But here's another just arrived—he's playing mibs for keeps!

The guide posts of his life fly by. The boy that is today,
Tomorrow morning we may wake to find has gone away,
And in his place will be a lad we've never known before,
Older and wiser in his ways and I filled with new-found lore.
Now here's another boy today, counting his marble heaps
And proudly boasting to his dad he's playing mibs for keeps!

His mother doesn't like this change. She says it is a shame—
That since he plays with larger boys, he's bound to lose the game.
But little do I mind his loss; I'm more concerned to know
The way he acts the times when he must see his marbles go.
And oh, I hope he will not be the little boy who weeps
Too much when he has failed to win while playing mibs for keeps.
Playing for keeps! Another step toward manhood's broad estate!
This is what some term growing up, or destiny, or fate.
Yet from this game with marbles, played with youngsters on the street
I hope will come a larger boy, too big to lie or cheat,
And by these mibs which from his clutch another madly sweeps,
I hope he'll learn the game of life which must be played for keeps.

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